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ABSTRACT

Intended for use by personnel in Florida local education agencies, this guide presents an overview of each of the eight components in a system for planning and conducting a data-based locally directed evaluation of secondary or postsecondary vocational education programs. The system is described as one whereby program products are compared with established needs, then analyzed to identify discrepancies that may exist. The eight components, described separately, each focus on a specified area of vocational education and suggest methods for evaluation, discrepancy analyses, and implementation feedback. The components are (1) organizing for data-based locally directed evaluation, (2) comparison of program output with community occupational needs, (3) assessing student career interests, (4) facilities and equipment evaluation, (5) analysis of the utilization of community resources, (6) evaluation of occupational competencies, (7) evaluation of instructional personnel, and (8) assessment of local budget policy for support of vocational instructional program. (Booklets on each component are available separately.) (JT)

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DATA-BASED LOCALLY DIRECTED EVALUATION

A Guide for Teachers, Supervisors, and Administrators

OE 011 609

DATA-BASED LOCALLY DIRECTED EVALUATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

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Hollie B. Thomas
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Foreword

The Vocational Education Act of 1963, as amended in 1976, prescribes evaluation of vocational education programs and services. It charges State Advisory Councils for Vocational-Technical Education with the responsibility for reporting the results of its annual evaluations to the U.S. Commissioner of Education and to the National Advisory Council for Vocational Education. It further prescribes that each state evaluate the effectiveness of programs within the state which receives funding under the Act. The Act, however, is void on the assignment of responsibility for local evaluation.

The Educational Accountability Act of 1976 (Laws of Florida, Chapter 76-223) (Section: 229.555) reads in part:

> ". . . (a) The specific responsibilities of the commissioner shall include the following: . .11. Establish procedures for continuous evaluation of system efficiency and effectiveness . . ."

This Act not only mandates continuous evaluation at the state level, but it also requires evaluation at the district level. Section 229.565, Educational Evaluation Procedures, reads in part:

> "(2) Educational Evaluation. --The Commissioner of Education shall periodically examine and evaluate procedures, records, and programs in each district to determine compliance with rules established by the state board. Such evaluation shall include, but not be limited to the following: . . . (d) An evaluation of the standards by which the school district evaluates basic and special programs for quality.

efficiency, and effectiveness . . ."

The Act also requires that each district report annually on the results of program evaluation.

> Section 229.575 (2) reads in part: "District Report. -- Each district shall annually report on the status of education in the district. Such reports shall contain information about how well school instructional programs enable students to meet the minimum performance standards, results of program evaluations, . . ."

The Florida Department of Education, Division of Vocational Education, however, had taken the initiative for evaluation before this legislative mandate and established the design and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation system as a goal to be accomplished no later than 1980.

The Florida model, when fully implemented, will consist of three levels or stages of evaluation: (1) Data-Based Locally Directed Evaluation, (DBLDE), (2) state directed Vocational Education Instructional Programs, and (3) a state conducted course or program audit. Each level has a specific or distinct function in the total evaluation process.

The first level, data-based locally directed evaluation DBLDE, is an evaluation conducted within the Local Education Agency (LEA) by an individual(s) or team(s) selected from local administrators, staff, faculty, students, and citizens. The express purpose of DBLDE is to determine how well local education goals and objectives

are being met. Information from a data-based locally directed evaluation, when conscientiously collected and analyzed, will provide local education agencies with the summative evaluation information necessary for legitimate educational decision-making. It will also provide the information necessary to respond adequately to questions generated by the state directed review of vocational education programs.

The second level, state directed Vocational Education Instructional Program review, consists of a comprehensive evaluation of vocational education programs by an external review team. This team is normally comprised of staff members from the Division of Vocational Education, Area Office, who are charged with the responsibility for insuring the efficiency and effectiveness of vocational education programs. Often an observer from the Bureau of Research, Dissemination, and Evaluation, Division of Vocational Education, will be included in the site visitation.

This program review team focuses its attention on how well the local education agency is complying with state established standards for evaluating education programs. The state directed review is designed to answer such questions as:

a. How well is the locally directed evaluation functioning?

b. Are the desired outcomes of the vocational programs being produced?

The formal report resulting from the state-directed vocational education instructional program review will validate or, possibly invalidate, the effectiveness of a locally directed evaluation. It will provide information from which recommendations for improving the quality, efficiency, and effectiveness of local program offerings may be formulated.

The third level of evaluation, course or program audit, is frequently confused with or erroneously used to refer to a state-directed program review. Although is contains some components of review, it deals primarily with fiscal matters. A program audit conducted by the Division of Vocational Education is designed to answer questions concerning FTE, program cost category (monies earned and returned), course numbering, allocation of classroom time for fiscal purposes, etc. The audit also requires a formal report that normally verifies or refutes the proper use of state and federal monies.

The purpose of this guide is to assist personnel from local education agencies in planning for and conducting a data-based locally directed evaluation. It contains suggested procedures and sample instrumentation from which local education agencies may develop a system of local

evaluation unique to their particular needs. The locally-directed evaluation system will also provide a data base from which local education agencies may initiate actions necessary to insure that the state established standards for reviewing vocational education instructional programs are being met.

INTRODUCTION

DATA-BASED LOCALLY DIRECTED EVALUATION

The system by which Local Education Agencies (LEAs) obtain data regarding how well the educational program is doing has been designated as "Data-Based Locally Directed Evaluation" (DBLDE). It is a formalized process by which local education agencies can look critically at their total programs for the purpose of improving, expanding, or modifying their vocational education offerings. This process includes the collection and analysis of information to guide the educational decision makers in making decisions concerning needed alterations both during the cycle of educational programs and prior to recycling these programs.

DBLDE is designed to provide summative evaluative feedback regarding how well the local education agency meets state-established instructional standards in terms of program processes and products.

It incorporates a system whereby program products are compared with established needs, then analyzed to identify discrepancies that may exist. After discrepancies, if any, are identified, recommendations are prepared and distributed to action agents within the local education agency, thus providing the impetus necessary to facilitate the change necessary for improving local vocational education programs.

A basic premise of DBLDE is that individuals who conduct a local evaluation should be drawn from the Local Education

Agency (LEA) with responsibility for the vocational program(s) and from the community which the LEA serves. An advantage of this approach is that individuals from the LEA and the local community are the most familiar with local needs and problems. Consequently, they should be better prepared to provide concerned leadership for DBLDE activities. On the other hand, a frequently expressed objection is that individuals closely involved in the local education process sometimes fail to recognize the need for evaluation. This objection appears weak, however, when considering that DBLDE involves citizens advisory committee members, administrators, supervisors, teachers, and other community representatives who must subsequently respond to the recommendations generated from their evaluation.

The various aspects of DBLDE are not new; most of these have been employed by local education agencies for many years. However, such evaluation activities have often been informal and fragmented. Thus, a purpose of this guide is to compile, in a single document, evaluation procedures and instrumentation that have been used successfully in the past as well as those more recently developed. The local education agency may then systematically select instrumentation and organize activities to satisfy its particular evaluation needs. A systematic, organized approach to DBLDE would provide more adequate data from which to make

decisions which result in improved delivery of programs, services, and activities which directly affect student outcomes.

This guide presents evaluation techniques carefully selected from a wide variety of sources and condensed into simplified form. As such, the guide intends to provide vocational educators with information necessary in constructing local evlauation procedures with a minimum of wasted time and needless frustration. Each "component" focuses on a specified area of Vocational Education which may call for evaluation and suggests methods for actual evaluation, discrepancy analyses, and implementation of feedback. FLORIDA VOCATIONAL EDUCATORS ARE ENCOURAGED TO FREELY SELECT AND ADAPT ANY OR ALL OF THE IDEAS PRESENTED IN THIS GUIDE TO THE NEEDS OF LOCAL EVALUATION. By creative application of these concepts to the unique needs of the Local Education Agencies, more rational program decisions can be achieved.

Component One: Organizing for Data-Based Locally Directed Evaluation

This component suggests methods, techniques, and procedures that the LEA may adopt or modify when developing a system of DBLDE unique to its specific evaluation needs. Emphasis is placed on the roles of the local education agency administration and the evaluation team. Without a

firm commitment from the local administration, any attempt at comprehensive local evaluation will surely fail. Without the combined efforts and input of local citizens, educational administrators, supervisors, teachers, and students, the data obtained through DBLDE will be fragmented, vague, and largely meaningless.

Component Two: Comparison of Program Output with Community Occupational Needs

This component provides a vehicle by which the LEA can identify discrepancies between program output (its graduates, completers, or those leaving early, but with saleable skills) and identified labor needs of business and industry. It suggests that the LEA utilize existing occupational forecasts data or develop local methodology and instrumentation from which to determine local occupational needs, to identify the number of program completers, to compare these, and to analyze the results. Suggested procedures for conducting the evaluation activities and sample instrumentation for gathering data are also included.

Component Three: Assessing Student Career Interests

The procedures included in this component are designed to enhance the collection and use of student career interest information. The component provides an overview of popular standardized career interest inventories and suggestions for developing local instruments for assessing student interest.

The focal point is the secondary level. However, suggestions are offered for assessing student career interests in adult schools, area vocational-technical centers, and at the community college. The primary purpose for assessing career interest information is to determine whether or not students are actually enrolled in vocational programs or courses in which they have a measured career interest but no program is offered. Data obtained through assessing student career interests, when combined with other local evaluation data, provides an information base from which the LEA may adequately address the standards for state-conducted vocational education instructional program review.

Component Four: Facilities and Equipment Evaluation

The evaluation procedures contained in this component can help to improve the use and safety of facilities and equipment. It involves the inventory of physical resources and the observation and rating of facilities and equipment characteristics. The local evaluation team, cooperating with a staff steering committee and a citizens advisory committee, systematically evaluate existing facilities and equipment, analyze findings, and make recommendations concerning the adequacy of facilities and equipment as related to the state standards for review of instructional programs and attainment of instructional objectives.

Component Five: Analysis of Community Resources Utilization

Utilization of this component is designed to open communication channels among all segments of the community. Cooperative efforts between the local education agency and the business and industrial community help provide students with the experiences necessary to develop the work skills and attitudes requisite to on-the-job success. If offers suggestions for defining the community to be served, procedures for analyzing community resources, utilization, steps for reporting and using collected data, and sample survey instruments for collecting information. The primary method employed in this analysis is to first identify community resources considered of value to the LEA, then determine the resources being used by vocational teachers, identify discrepancies between these, and finally make recommendations based on the findings of the analysis.

An analysis of community resources utilization provides a vehicle for improving instruction by identifying potential resource personnel and facilities and sites for field trips, tours, and work stations. The first-hand experiences provided by community resources to students often create positive motivation for continued or additional occupational study.

Component Six: Evaluation of Occupational Competencies

This component capitalized on the existing Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States (V-TECS) catalogs to assist LEAs in identifying tasks and competencies essential to occupational success. V-TECS catalogs contain job-sequenced tasks, validated objectives, performance guides, and criterion-referenced measures. They are designed to meet the individual needs of students and are a major aid in identifying local occupational competencies necessary to success on the job. Included also are suggested procedures and sample instrumentation for use by the LEA in developing their own system of competency identification. These procedures and instruments should prove extremely useful to the LEA in the absence of V-TECS catalogs appropriate for the program area being evaluated.

This component also provides suggested procedures for determining the occupational competence of program graduates or those leaving early with marketable skills. It suggests that a team from local business or industry evaluate students through a type of performance test. By comparing the skills developed in the instructional setting against those identified as essential, through V-TECS or task analysis, the local education agency may draw conclusions as to the adequacy of the instructional program. From these conclusions, recommendations for improvement of

instruction can be made.

Component Seven: Evaluation of Instructional Personnel

Traditionally, evaluation of instructional personnel has been through classroom observation for administrative purposes. The activities suggested in this section, however, are designed primarily to aid the vocational teacher in identifying and correcting individual weaknesses. A set of ideal teacher traits are provided from which the individual teacher can establish standards for his/her performance in the classroom or laboratory. After establishing individual standards of performance, the teacher rates him/herself against these standards, thus, identifying individual weaknesses (discrepancies) which may exist.

This component also provides suggestions for student evaluation of instruction and evaluation by supervisory personnel. However, the emphasis of these evaluations is on providing feedback to the instructor from which to improve instruction. It is suggested that all of the data gathered in the evaluation process become the property of and be retained by the teacher. The sample instruments suggested for collecting data from students and supervisory personnel are designed so that the teacher can readily compare their ratings against the self-established standards.

Component Eight: Assessment of Local Budget Policy for Support of Vocational Instructional Programs

This component provides a simplified procedure whereby the local education agency can determine the amount of funds generated by its vocational programs or courses, the pro-rata share of indirect costs, and the direct costs. After the costs and funds generated are determined, the LEA may then compare funds available to a given program or course with funds allocated to identify discrepancies that may exist. Data obtained through assessment of local budget policy provides the information necessary for (1) determining the adequacy of local budget policy, (2) dispelling complaints concerning budget support of individual courses or programs, (3) making recommendations for budget policy change, and (4) preparing for state-conducted vocational education instructional program review.

Glossary

Citizens Advisory Committee: a group of persons outside the educational profession chosen to advise regarding a school program.

Direct Costs: costs directly incurred by programs (i.e., salaries, fringe benefits, etc.).

Discrepancy: a difference between established standards of "what should be," the ideal, and "what is," the real.

Discrepancy Analysis: the process of comparing the data collected on "what is" with the standards established by the local education agency personnel or the local evaluation team.

FEFP: Florida Education Finance Program.

FTE: (Full-Time Equivalent Student): one student on the membership roll of one school program or a combination of school programs for five school days (one school week) or the equivalent consisting of not less than 25 net hours.

Indirect Costs: costs shared by programs (utilities, maintenance, administrative costs, etc.).

LEA (Local Education Agency): the local school district, the local community college district, or other institutions with educational responsibilities.

Pro Rata: the process of dividing costs or expenses by individual programs or courses.

Program Cost Category: cost category or cost factor established by the legislature based on the relative cost differences between programs.

Program/Course Audit: on site inspection of local management to determine funding eligibility, legal compliance, conformance with policy or regulations, and soundness of management practices.

State Directed Program Review: joint evaluation of individual vocational education programs by local instructors, administrators and Department of Education Regional Program Consultants.

Steering Committee: a committee generally representative of the various interests involved and responsible for the over-all determination and, sometimes, implementation of policies in regard to a project or activity that is to be undertaken.

V-TECS (Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States): a voluntary organization consisting of 20 states and two branches of the military. V-TECS was formed to develop catalogs of performance objectives, criterion-referenced measures, and performance guides for use by teachers in vocational-technical education.